

# Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht

Didaktik und Methodik im Bereich Deutsch als Fremdsprache

ISSN 1205-6545 Jahrgang 19, Nummer 1 (April 2014)

---

## It takes more than two for this tango: Moving beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom

**Gabriele Blell & Sabine Doff**

**Gabriele Blell**

Didaktik des Englischen

Englisches Seminar

Leibniz Universität Hannover

Königsworther Platz 1

30167 Hannover

Tel.: +49 (0) 511 762 3079

E-Mail: [gabriele.blell@engsem.uni-hannover.de](mailto:gabriele.blell@engsem.uni-hannover.de)

**Sabine Doff**

FB 10 - Fremdsprachendidaktik Englisch

Universität Bremen

Postfach 330440

28334 Bremen

Tel.: +49 (0) 421 218 68170

E-Mail: [doff@uni-bremen.de](mailto:doff@uni-bremen.de)

**Abstract:** Bis dato haben Prozesse der Globalisierung und damit einhergehende (beispielsweise kulturwissenschaftliche) Theoriekonzepte nur oberflächlich Eingang in den Englischunterricht gefunden – wenn überhaupt. Dies führt dazu, dass das Lehren und Lernen über Kultur in diesem Fach häufig weder mit der einschlägigen Lebenserfahrung der Lernenden noch mit dem Wissensstand in zentralen Bezugsdisziplinen korrespondiert.

In diesem Beitrag wird argumentiert, dass das Lehren und Lernen über Kultur grundlegend überdacht werden muss, um die Lücke zwischen Klassenzimmer und (Lebens-)Wirklichkeit in einer globalisierten Welt zu schließen. Aus diesem Grund wird zunächst diskutiert, wie es aus Sicht linguistischer, kultur- und literaturwissenschaftlicher Theorieperspektive gelingen kann, kulturelle Konzepte des „Anderen“ bzw. „Fremden“ konstruktiv weiter zu entwickeln. Anschließend werden Implikationen diskutiert, die sich daraus für das Lernen und Lehren über Kultur im Englischunterricht ergeben; Prozesse transkulturellen Lernens und Lehrens werden in diesem Zusammenhang definiert und kritisch analysiert. Abschließend wird ein überarbeitetes und erweitertes Modell inter- bzw. transkulturellen Lernens eingeführt und angewendet, das auf dem einflussreichen Modell interkultureller Kompetenz von Michael Byram (1997) basiert.

Processes of globalization and related theoretical concepts – for example, in cultural studies – have so far had little influence on the teaching of culture in the EFL-classroom. Thus, the teaching of culture in the language classroom often matches neither the learners' experience nor the state of knowledge in key referential disciplines.

It will be argued that, in order to close the gap between teaching about culture inside and outside the global EFL-classroom, rethinking how we teach about culture is of utmost importance. Therefore, movement beyond the cultural conceptions of the 'other' or the 'different' will first be discussed from the perspective of linguistic, cultural and literary theories. Secondly, some emerging implications of the teaching and learning about culture in EFL will be discussed. Transcultural teaching and learning processes (processes going beyond the 'other') will then be defined and critically analysed. Finally, the paper introduces and applies an extended and revised model of intercultural/transcultural learning based on Byram's influential model of intercultural communication (1997).

**Schlagwörter:** Kultur, Literatur, Englischunterricht, interkulturelles Lernen, transkulturelles Lernen, Globalisierung; culture, literature, EFL, intercultural learning, transcultural learning, globalization

## 1. Introduction

Learning a language/languages inherently means learning about culture. Nobody, and least of all language teachers, would seriously disagree with this statement. In order to communicate successfully, language use must be associated with culturally appropriate behavior since language is not only part of how we define culture, but it reflects and constitutes culture at the same time. Studying culture has been a part of EFL-language classroom curricula for many years in German schools, most often having been defined as intercultural learning. Learners cannot master the English language at a high level of proficiency unless they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language is used. In accordance with intercultural learning strategies, students, for example, are taught the skills to explore and understand new cultural clusters and behaviors in relation to what is well known to them already through appropriate knowledge acquisition and perspective coordination (cf. Bredella 2002; Byram 1997; Hu 1999, 2000).

Due to enormous improvements in the economy, transportation and digital communication, international businesses, work-related migration, transnational mobility and cross-cultural contacts have grown rapidly since the last several decades of the 20th century. Thus cultural patterns have changed substantially as have their members who have become “floating identities” (Grünwald, Küster & Lüning 2011: 69). The hybridity of individual as well as collective identities has thus become more and more evident; the cultural “connections between things”, as the leading postcolonial theorist Edward Said (see chapter 2) put it, have gained considerable importance in an increasingly globalized world (Doff & Schulze-Engler 2011: 3). *Global spaces and local places* increasingly intersect in this process (glocalization).<sup>1</sup>

As a result, the increasingly globalized world has promoted the growth of heterogeneous and culturally diverse EFL-language classrooms, accompanied by the social phenomenon of multilingualism. It is therefore important to help our students understand that culture can no longer be seen as a monolithic and static construct. For example: Students should know that American and Mexican cultures will change dramatically in the near future due to the ongoing migration between Mexico and the U.S. as part of “globalization from below” (most importantly the physical migration of Mexicans to the U.S., the spread of Spanish as an increasingly important means of communication in the U.S. and the formation of social resistance movements) and “globalization from above” (most importantly the spread of U.S. and multinational businesses in Mexico due to expanding economic and media connections) (Priewe 2007: 23). Thus the traditional concepts of American culture no longer match the shifting cultural identities and productions as they have been taught in the EFL-language classroom for years in Germany. Teaching about (American) culture(s) inside the EFL-classroom will thus have to change accordingly.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, our paper is intended as a contribution to recent research addressing aspects of globalization and foreign language learning, with a focus on English as foreign language (EFL). We will argue that processes of globalization, on the one hand, and related theoretical concepts, for example in cultural studies, on the other, have so far influenced the teaching of culture in the EFL-classroom only to a limited extent. Consequently the teaching of culture in the language classroom often neither matches the learners’ experience nor the state of knowledge in key referential disciplines. We will argue that it is high time to rethink this situation in order to be able to close the gap between teaching about culture inside and outside the global EFL-classroom.

Our approach to discussing the topic is guided by a set of interconnected arguments that revolve around the relation between language/language learning (especially EFL) and culture(s)/inter- and transcultural learning in a time and space in which nationality is progressively losing its influence on cultural (and language) representations. Against this backdrop we are convinced that teaching about culture in the EFL-classroom has to move beyond the self/other-binary by which the field has so far often been dominated – hence the title of our paper.

---

Gabriele Blell & Sabine Doff (2014), It takes more than two for this tango: Moving beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 19: 1, 77-96. Abrufbar unter [http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell\\_Doff.pdf](http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell_Doff.pdf).

Following this introduction, the second part illustrates our starting point, i.e. the connection between language and culture and the challenge of teaching them in a globalized world. It also presents selected vistas from cultural and literary theory which we find helpful in meeting this challenge. In part 3 we take a look at salient issues with regard to the discussion of teaching about culture now and in the recent past, with implications for the current debate which are made explicit in part 4. Here, we suggest an extension of Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence (Byram 1997) into inter-/transcultural communicative competence to facilitate a move beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the EFL-classroom (part 4.1). Our new model is finally applied to the reading and teaching of a transcultural text (part 4.2), a poem by the Mexican-American writer Benjamin Alire Sáenz: "The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders" (2006).

## 2. Language/Culture(s): From Nation to Globalization

The phenomenon with which we are dealing is not new. A correspondent of the *Church Missionary Society* reported back to London in May 1817, describing the method of English language education at the Protestant mission in Southeast India:

The principal method of teaching them the English language would be by giving them English phrases and sentences, with a translation for them to commit to memory. These sentences might be so arranged as to teach them whatever sentiments the instructor should choose. They would become, in short, attached to the Mission; and though first put into the school from worldly motives alone, should any of them be converted [...] they might soon be prepared for a great usefulness in the cause of religion (Missionary Register 1818: 187).

This example used by Homi Bhabha to illustrate "one of the most artful technologies of colonial power" (Bhabha 1994: 151) also shows that teaching of language and culture (exemplified in this case by religion) was inextricably linked. In fact, language teachers cannot teach language without teaching culture – so it is crucial for them to be aware of the powerful language-culture connection.

Yet, a definition of what we teach remains an enormous challenge: For much of the 19th century, many people around the globe were firmly convinced that we lived in a world of distinct races. For much of the 20th century, many people were equally convinced that we lived in a world of cultures, i.e. national cultures. One of them was/is Joe who defines himself as follows:

### I am Canadian

- 1 Hey, I'm not a lumberjack, or a fur trader ...
- 2 I don't live in an igloo or eat blubber, or own a dogsled ...
- 3 and I don't know Jimmy, Sally or Suzy from Canada,
- 4 although I'm certain they're really really nice.
- 5 I have a Prime Minister, not a president.
- 6 I speak English and French, not American.
- 7 And I pronounce it 'about', not 'a boot'.
- 8 I can proudly sew my country's flag on my backpack.
- 9 I believe in peace keeping, not policing,
- 10 diversity, not assimilation,
- 11 and that the beaver is a truly proud and noble animal.
- 12 A toque is a hat, a chesterfield is a couch,
- 13 and it is pronounced 'zed' not 'zee', 'zed' !!!!
- 14 Canada is the second largest landmass!
- 15 The first nation of hockey!
- 16 and the best part of North America
- 17 My name is Joe!!
- 18 And I am Canadian!!!<sup>3</sup>

---

Gabriele Blell & Sabine Doff (2014), It takes more than two for this tango: Moving beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 19: 1, 77-96. Abrufbar unter [http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell\\_Doff.pdf](http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell_Doff.pdf).

This clip (entitled “The Rant”), which was designed as an advertisement for a popular Canadian beer brand and which offers great potential for teaching, shows that the idea of national cultures still has its appeal today. Yet in the wake of rapidly accelerating globalization, traditional notions of understanding the social world primarily in terms of ‘cultures’ has lost much of its credibility (cf. Doff & Schulze-Engler 2011). Cultural realities for most people in the world are much more complex than simplistic notions of national ‘cultures’ as irreducibly different symbolic worlds of their own seem to suggest. The real challenge in coming to terms with this cultural complexity encountered in the social world lies in exploring the cultural practices of individuals and social groups that operate within a globally interlinked network of culture. A main challenge for cultural and literary theory as well as for language teachers today arguably lies in thinking beyond the self/other-binary that is beyond the framework of a world of (national) cultures (American, Canadian, in Joe’s words) in exploring the potential of new, ‘singular’ concepts of culture in a globalized world.

In an attempt to move in this direction, recent cultural and literary theory has shown a marked tendency to move away from notions of culture that see people as well as cultural artefacts, for example texts, as determined by ‘their’ respective culture towards more flexible concepts such as hybridity, creolization or transculturality that relate to a growing interest in the specific modes in which individuals and groups ‘do culture’ as a social practice. The idea of separate (often national) cultures is supplanted by the notion of a globally constituted “pool of culture” from which “individuals or different kinds of collectivities come to assemble their particular repertoires” (Hannerz 1998: 49).

We have argued that in pedagogical research and practice the exclusive focus on the self/other-binary, often reflected in the prefix ‘inter-’ (for example, international, intercultural), is no longer sufficient in order to master ongoing dynamic processes related to culture outside and inside EFL-classrooms. Due to massive globalization everyday experiences and educational realities have changed. Cultural clusters have been transformed into puzzle-like ‘networks’ (“Netzwerke von Lebenswelten”, Bolton 2003: 15), which are less and less definable in geographical, economic and political terms, but are characterized by massive migration processes and mobility, as Wolf (2008: 3) argues:

Diese Kultur ist durch die Überlagerung verschiedener Räume, durch die Vereinigung und Verflechtung vieler Subkulturen geprägt. Sie ist keine abgeschlossene, fassbare Sache. Sie ist ein Prozess, der sich ständig verändert und neu ereignet. Sie ist definiert durch ihre Nichtdefinierbarkeit.

Cultural clusters are overlapping more and more and are producing new similarities and differences. The notion that people, cultural artifacts or literary texts are determined by (presumably one) culture of origin has met with considerable scepticism across a wide range of disciplines. A major contribution to this perspective has come from post-colonial theorists:

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are no more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively, white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about. Survival in fact is about the connections between things (Said 1993: 407-408).

The perspective not only in postcolonial theory has been moving beyond the self/other-binary to exploring multifaceted relations between individuals as well as cultural clusters. This fundamental shift has also affected concepts of teaching about culture. Outmoded concepts of intercultural education, therefore, have been analyzed and partly criticized as being based on an obsolete idea of culture as homogeneous and monolithic (e.g. Huggan 2006; Welsch 1997; Wolf 2008). For English language teachers in particular this development marks a turning point since they belong to a profession that has repeatedly been accused of actively contributing to “linguistic imperialism” (Phil-

lipson 1992). Teachers and learners alike in the EFL-classroom have to come to terms with the simultaneous trends of rapidly growing multilingualism, acquired or learned, and English as the *lingua franca*.

In the wake of this transition, established teaching objectives in the field commonly labelled “intercultural didactics” have come under pressure, a process often signalled by a change of the prefix ‘inter’ into, for example, ‘multi-’, ‘cross-’ or ‘trans-’ cultural learning. Recent work (see, for example, Altmayer 2008; Bach 2005; Delanoy 2006, 2008; Doff & Schulze-Engler 2011; Guest 2006; Küster 2003; Schulze-Engler 2006; Witte 2006) dealing with the transition from ‘inter’ to ‘trans’ illustrates, however, that the implementation of such a theoretical re-orientation is a long and complex process that takes a lot more than just a change of prefix. As the following brief review shows, this process has only just begun.

### 3. Teaching about Culture in the EFL-classroom

#### 3.1. Looking back and looking ahead

In the 1990s, the salient role of culture in language teaching and the conceptualization of related learning objectives were discussed extensively (as, for example, the works by Byram, Hu and Kramsch from the 1990s in the bibliography show). The aim of teaching about culture in the language classroom was most commonly conceptualized as ‘intercultural learning’, ‘understanding the other’ or ‘intercultural communicative competence’ (ICC). ICC soon became an implicit or explicit key objective of language teaching which was hardly ever contested. In short, three salient aspects shaped the discussion in the 1990s (and beyond):

- **Self/other-binary:** The basis of learning about culture is a binary opposition between the existence of a ‘native culture’/‘real C1’ vs. a ‘target culture’/‘real C2’. This idea only works when it is based on the assumption of different cultures as separable entities as visualized, for example, in separate circles (cf. Kramsch 1993: 208). Joe’s rant also illustrates this point of view rather dramatically.
- **‘Fremdverstehen’:** The main aim of intercultural learning is for C1 to become aware of the differences between C1 and C2, in other words ‘understanding’ C2 and/or vice versa and mediating between them.
- **Theory-practice-gap:** Calls for a thorough theoretical re-orientation with regard to the underlying concept(s) of culture already surfacing in the debate during the 1990s. However, these new concepts (for example the introduction of Homi Bhabha’s concept of ‘third space’ into language education by Kramsch 1993) and the consequences of their implementation in the language classroom have not yet become part of the mainstream debate.

In the ongoing discussion in the new millennium the main challenge soon became obvious: new vistas from cultural theory have yet to be integrated into a pragmatic yet dynamic teaching approach (see, for example, Witte’s approach towards a progression of cultural learning in the EFL-classroom, 2006). In other words, it has become obvious in recent years that it takes far more than a new theory to move beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom.

A new approach could lead the transition from identifying binary oppositions and observing difference on the basis of a comparison between ‘self’ and ‘other’ (which could serve as a starting point – but not as a result) via “more inclusionary models of cultural globalization” towards “a new type of transnational, transcultural (neo-universal?) self-as-part-of-the-other model” (Bach 2005: 1, see also Delanoy 2006, 2008). Models of teaching culture in the language classroom would also have to reconceptualize culture as an open, fluid (‘hybrid’) and individual (yet non-arbitrary) construct. If this shift is to bear fruit, teachers (and learners alike) should become researchers of culture:

I believe that researchers should not so readily accept questionable notions such as determinism uncritically nor gloss over the mechanics of causality; because culture is nebulous, dynamic, fluid it does not lend itself well to easy analysis. I call upon researchers to resist the urge to reduce cultures to binary opposites which produce false dichotomies, distort realities and easily lead to the stereotyping, exoticizing, or essentializing

of a culture. Researchers should be agents of discovery not transmitters of previously held dogmas and prejudices. If we hope to accurately portray the culture under study and truly help [...] learners to absorb this understanding in ways beneficial to the classroom, it is the least one should do (Guest 2006: 14-15).

Adopting such a position does not reject the key role which the experience of (cultural) difference and the resulting dialogue plays in the language classroom. A transcultural approach – as this direction could be called – thus does not necessarily replace intercultural learning, but certainly transforms it. If teaching about culture in the language classroom is to reflect both the determination to avoid a fetishization of ‘other cultures’ and the willingness to move beyond the self/other-binary and engage with cultural difference instead, this first requires a corresponding fresh approach from teachers.

### 3.2. Six propositions for initiating change

The following six propositions may provide a helpful basis for designing such a much-needed transcultural approach in EFL teaching theory and practice.

1. *‘Dialogue’ is constitutive for both inter- and transcultural learning.*

We agree with Schumann and Delanoy who propose that concepts of intercultural learning (intracultural processes included) and transcultural learning should be seen as being complementary rather than in opposition to each other (Delanoy 2008: 95; Schumann 2008: 8, 83). Both concepts are grounded in one genuine, dialogical function, although applied differently (Antor 2006). Whereas intercultural learning mainly aims at dialogical understanding between the self and ‘the other’ in face-to-face situations or via the media (for example, literature or film), the idea of dialogue and permeability is already inherent and inscribed in the notion of transcultural understanding. The transcultural notion in this case is not only ‘understanding the other’ by dialogue but rather finding out what happens when relations between cultural clusters or people who represent them (often more than two are involved – hence the title of our paper) develop. Consequently, dialogical thinking gives way to new and multiple dialogues between different life- and working-worlds, within or between cultures (global *and* local). Mobility and permeability, after all, which are closely associated with transcultural learning, increase the interface for common ground and similarities between cultures, on the one hand, and, in almost the same manner, increase the space for new differences, on the other. Hence, transcultural learning opens new topics and issues for negotiation.

2. *Perspective awareness is a central competence to constantly negotiate between ‘floating identities’.*

Transcultural thinking and learning promotes understanding transient and fleeting notions rather than notions of a fixed or static culture. Cultural identities are no longer fixed, but are “floating identities/situated identities” according to the varying roles they play in corresponding environments (Grünewald, Küster & Lüning 2011: 69). Due to the manifold equivocal and ambiguous experiences which learners make, they need to change or coordinate their perspectives in a dialogue more often and more thoroughly than before. Learners must be enabled to change perspectives quickly and profoundly. Uka (2010) uses the *Chameleon*-metaphor in this sense. Similar to chameleons, which are able to change color in various situations, learners need to be enabled to easily adapt to varied communication situations in order to complete tasks. In a similar context (global learning), Selby & Rathenow (2003: 9) highlight the development of ‘perspective consciousness’ as a central competence for learning processes. Learners should be aware of the multidimensional and floating realities in cultural encounters.

3. *Transcultural learning demands searching for both common ground and difference.*

In order to interact successfully with people (or via other cultural representations) in dynamic and loose formations, learners and teachers should try to look for common ground (in Edward Said’s words ‘the connections between things’, see chapter 2) first and then for differences. Also Hauenschild (2010: 164) demands that to make inter-/transcultural learning more likely “das Verschiedene im Gemeinsamen und nicht das Gemeinsame im Verschiedenen weiterzudenken”.

#### 4. *Transcultural learning includes discourses on power.*

However, increasing mobility and cultural mingling do not automatically lead to barrier-free dialogues and spaces. Kollenrott, for example, using the example of the spreading of English as a world language, clearly points out in her analysis, based on Kachru's model (1985) of 'The Three Circles of English', the great asymmetries in distributing English worldwide ('Distributionsasymmetrie(n)', Kollenrott 2008: 56). If language is a resource, it enables those who speak it to participate in discussions and voice their concerns. Speakers of other languages are excluded from these discussions if the focus remains on one (world) language. Global economic as well as cultural (language included) monopoly positions constantly produce and constitute new distribution asymmetries across cultural formations (a process Robert Phillipson labelled 'linguistic imperialism' with regard to the rise of English as a *lingua franca*). Learners therefore need to develop a critical literacy, for example to figure out reasons why a character in a novel remains 'silent' /'without a voice' or why he/she has to speak the language of his/her conquerors.<sup>4</sup> Hence, transcultural learning includes discourse(s) on power in the EFL-language classroom as well, i.e. challenging and deconstructing stereotypical and mostly asymmetrical notions in the field of policy (e.g., West/East), race (e.g. black/white), gender (e.g. male/female) or language (e.g. English/non English).

#### 5. *Transcultural learning has a great affiliation to Global Education.*

Inter-/transcultural learning is unquestionably related to the pedagogical and holistic concept of Global Education. The Global Education framework, mainly coined in the U.S. and Australia during the 1970s and 1980s, has encouraged a global perspective across the school curriculum in order to develop a sense of self/personality and appreciation of manifold diversities, for example, cultural, religious, racial or/and political (Cates 2000; Diehr 2007; Florio-Hansen 2002): "The final aim of global learning is to have students think globally and act locally" (Cates 2000: 241). Selby and Rathenow (2003: 9) argue for concepts beyond traditional 'dualities' as well: "Globales Lernen verbindet die vielfältigen Vernetzungen zwischen gesellschaftlich-kulturell entwickelten Phänomenen einerseits und naturgegebenen andererseits". Global Education clearly enriches the choice of (global) topics and problems for the EFL-language classroom as, for example, human rights, child labour or nature and environment. Hence, the modern EFL-language classroom will increasingly include globally oriented cultural media (literature, image, film etc.) that negotiate global and cross-cultural topics and movements as well. In most cases, these creations have been produced by authors who have come from hybrid and dynamically changing cultural backgrounds (e.g., Gloria Anzaldúa, Pat Mora or Sandra Cisneros). Here, the EFL-language learner finds new and controversial topics to explore, often written in more than one language (English) (for example, code switching and literary bilingualism, cf. Blell 2012).

#### 6. *Transcultural learning demands the development of 'border literacies'.*

Finally, the idea of transculturality and concepts of transcultural learning are opening up current pedagogical debates on diversity, i.e. how to deal with questions of heterogeneity in general (for example, religion, gender, class, race, culture, learners with special needs). Diversity means plurality and clearly opposes stigmatizing processes of 'othering people' (we vs. you). Diversity means both looking for similarities (i.e. people always belong to more than only one community) and differences (looking for differences only would cause and simply fix stereotypes and characteristic values, cf. Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben & Vinz 2007: 156). Diversity Education, according to Appelbaum (2002: 62), aims at the development of border literacies in order to enable students to successfully interact in/between various communities. Appelbaum (2002: 179) defines border literacies as "ways of interpreting culture and power in which insider/outsider status is replaced by blurring the boundaries and recognizing multiplicities or identity and group affiliation".

To sum up, we propose the following working definition for transcultural learning/transcultural competence: Transcultural learning, the development of transcultural competence (transcultural literacy, cf. Kostogriz & Tsolidis 2008), is complementary to intercultural learning and aims at the successful understanding of people in dynamized inter- and transcultural processes, in either face-to-face or text-conducted (e.g. literature, film, music) encounters. Due to mobility and globalization, students should be enabled to critically reflect on modern cultures as constantly renewing global and local living environments, which again may cause new social or cultural differences and, hence, a new discussion potential for EFL-language learners. Transculturally competent learners recognize hybridity as a

---

Gabriele Blell & Sabine Doff (2014), It takes more than two for this tango: Moving beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 19: 1, 77-96. Abrufbar unter [http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell\\_Doff.pdf](http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell_Doff.pdf).

central criterion for transcultural constructedness (e.g., hybrid identity, hybrid language, hybrid living and working space). In order to master transcultural encounters, students need, on the one hand, extended global knowledge particularly about asymmetrical social and cultural distribution processes and, on the other, appropriate skills to flexibly change and coordinate appropriate perspectives. Finally, critical transcultural awareness must be built up in the sense of being critically aware of both the options and limitations of plurality and diversity of human beings.

#### 4. Byram revisited: A Model of Transcultural Communicative Competence (TCC)

##### 4.1. The 1997 Model and the Model Revisited

Byram's 1997 complex and widely acknowledged model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) "specifically help[s] learners to negotiate meaning among two or more cultures involved in the communicative situation, relating the home and foreign cultures or identities to each other in a process of intercultural learning" (Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-von Ditfurth 2004: 23). In his model he suggests five competences or *savoirs* which the intercultural speaker has to integrate into learning processes (knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating / skills of discovery and interaction, education and attitudes). The following table roughly summarizes Byram's notions (Byram 1997).

	<b><i>Skills of interpreting and relating:</i></b> an ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain and relate it to documents or events from one's own	
<b><i>Knowledge</i></b> of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction	<b><i>Education</i></b> Critical cultural awareness / political education: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries	<b><i>Attitudes</i></b> curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
	<b><i>Skills of discovery and interaction:</i></b> an ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction	

Illustration 1: Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence: factors of intercultural communication (Byram 1997)

Applied to the commercial "I am Canadian" (see chapter 2) the intercultural speaker needs to negotiate various meanings in order to enjoy and understand the text.

- *Affective level/attitudes*

It is suggested that through the format of the Molson commercial clip (the speaker's [Joe] Canadian woodcutter shirt, the quickly changing images, his gestures and mimics) and the lyrical 'I' of the short clip who directly addresses the reader/viewer, the intercultural speaker will show *curiosity* and *openness* to find out more about Joe. This openness forms the necessary attitudinal basis to open oneself emotionally and cognitively to Joe's story and to be ready to decentre from 'one's own' position.



- *Cognitive level/knowledge*

During the initial phase the model suggests looking for *cultural similarities* (positive/negative auto- and hetero-stereotypes) and collecting *facts* helpful to understand the text (for example, *Landeskunde*, vocabulary, grammar). Readers/viewers of “I am Canadian”, for example, know or will easily find out about the stereotypes of Canadians from which Joe clearly distances himself (“I am not...” / “I don’t...”); they will probably find out further aspects about “being Canadian” which might be more or less new to them (“a toque is a hat”, l. 12, “Canada is the second largest landmass!”, l. 14, or “the first nation of hockey”, l. 15).

- *Skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovering and interaction*

At this level the learner may be astonished or confused by the last two lines in which Joe angrily shouts: “My name is Joe!! And I am Canadian!!!” (ll. 17/18). Here, Joe strongly admits and confesses to being Canadian whereas in line 1 he clearly rejects being a (stereotypical) Canadian (“lumberjack”, “fur trader”). He does not want to be seen like this. He insists on the destigmatization from stereotypical notions of “being Canadian”. In order to understand this partially contradictory communicative situation, the learner has to see the lines in the light of the complexity of Joe’s situation. On the one hand, Joe distances himself vehemently from long-standing stereotypes, which he dislikes, on the other, when trying to define himself, he falls back on (other) stereotypes which clearly have a positive connotation for him (“the first nation of hockey” / “the best part of North America” (ll. 15/16). His anger at the end can be interpreted, therefore, as a sign that he is beginning to understand that the concepts of a (collective) national identity and of an (individual) cultural identity are not the same and only partly overlap. His self-constructing processes go beyond the solely national issues of culture. Role plays or games that provoke a change in perspective may help students to experience and understand Joe’s change of view from being a member of a stereotyped national culture on the move to his complex understanding of “being Canadian” as part of his individual and (trans-)cultural identity.

- *Critical cultural awareness*

Gaining critical cultural awareness requires students to review the construction of their cultural identity as well. This could be, for example, supported by while- or post-reading tasks for the Molson commercial: Discuss the role of media in constructing culture and cultural identities. What kinds of ideological scripts lie below the surface of this commercial? Write your own commercial: “I am German” / “I am xy” (choose your own). Through developing the cognitive and the emotional space between ‘self’ and ‘other’, learners are slowly empowered into evolving into intercultural speakers integrating newly experienced insights into their set of already existing competences.

Unquestionably, Byram’s model forms a solid basis to negotiate meaning among two or more cultures, relating to home foreign cultures or identities. But texts, events or encounters which go beyond the traditional binary scope of self/other or of home culture/‘other’ culture (like the Molson commercial does to a certain extent) and allude to more cross-cultural and transcultural notions or other diversity situations, demand additional and more complex competences in order to understand and act accordingly.

Compared to predominantly intercultural communicative situations and learning scenarios as explained in chapter 3, we therefore suggest and introduce a modified and expanded *Model of Inter- and Transcultural Communicative Competence* (I/TCC). This is based on Byram’s Model of ICC but moves partly beyond it, with a special focus on overcoming the self/other-binary. Following our working definition of transcultural communicative competence (TCC) in 3.2, our model may be visualized as follows.

	<b><i>Skills of interpreting and relating:</i></b> an ability to interpret a document or event from various cultures, to explain and relate it to familiar documents or events	
<b><i>Knowledge</i></b> of social groups and their products and practices in familiar and new cultural contexts, and the general processes of societal and individual interaction  <b>plus ► <i>Global knowledge</i></b> of social groups and their products and practices <b>beyond</b> the self/other, and knowledge about asymmetrical and disputed global cultural processes  <b>plus ► <i>Multiple literacies</i></b> e.g. basic multilingual knowledge / media knowledge / visual knowledge to interpret various modes of presentation	<b><i>Education</i></b> Critical cultural awareness / political education: an ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in familiar and new cultures and countries  <b>plus ► <i>Critical transcultural awareness</i></b> an ability to evaluate critically and flexibly on the basis of manifold perspectives and perspective changes, practices and products <b>beyond</b> the self/other (perspective consciousness); to be aware of cultural synergies and dissents / perspective consciousness  <b>plus ► <i>Border literacies</i></b> an ability to interpret cultural processes in which the insider/outsider status is replaced by blurring the boundaries and recognizing multiplicities or identity and group affiliation	<b><i>Attitudes</i></b> curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about different cultures and dynamic or mobile cultural situations and familiar beliefs (maybe 'floating' in between)
	<b><i>Skills of discovery and interaction:</i></b> an ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (listen carefully, ask/ask for clarification, moderate, explain, mediate etc.)	

Illustration 2: Model of Inter-/Transcultural Communicative Competence: factors of inter-/transcultural learning (cf. Blell & Rust 2012: 117)

- *Affective level / attitudes*

The transcultural speaker opens him-/herself up emotionally and cognitively to more dynamic and mobile cultural situations and stories at the same time, including overlapping or sometimes quickly alternating scenarios. Learners experience and value themselves and others as 'floating' identities (construction/deconstruction) which can open up new surfaces for understanding similarities or differences.

- *Cognitive level: global knowledge / multilingual knowledge / multiple literacies*

Additionally, the transcultural speaker consequently needs more global knowledge at the same time, i.e. more than only competence in English as a *lingua franca* but partly also in other world or related languages or, at least, a range of intercomprehension skills to manage multilingual and multicultural situations flexibly. Furthermore, he/she needs profound competences in decoding or producing all sorts of texts, multimodal texts included (a video clip, a blog, a Facebook entry etc.).

The powerful language-culture-connection (see chapter 2), however, should not be ignored or violated, but can surely be expanded and enriched by a multi-faceted field of examples for the EFL-classroom, i.e. broadening the

range of choice of reading material. The so-called New Literatures in English provide excellent starting points for a transcultural teaching approach (see Doff & Schulze-Engler 2011), i.e. a move ‘beyond’ the inner to the outer and expanding circles of the English-speaking world (Kachru 1985) as far as provenance and/or setting of literary texts are concerned. By providing space for texts focussing on cultural hybridity or multilingual texts in the global EFL-classroom, the self/other-binary may be overcome, paving the way for a transcultural approach.

- *Skills of interpreting and relating & skills of discovering and interaction*

Since interactive scenarios are becoming more complex and, unquestionably, more controversial in hybrid and transcultural settings, the demands for skills of discovering and interpreting will increase. In order to understand multicultural and multilingual situations, the learner has to analyse and interpret scenarios in the light of the complexity of cultural clusters (not just one ‘other’) which may (and most likely will) partially overlap.

Against this backdrop, the thematic focus and thus the skills required when teaching about culture shift according to Said’s description quoted above: whereas binary oppositions can still serve as starting points, they can no longer be seen as sufficient to deal with cultural complexity. In the language classroom learners need to be encouraged to move beyond these binary oppositions in order to centre on the ‘making of’ culture, cultural practices and ethnic identities as well as on “the connection between things”. In order to be able to implement this focus, fears and prejudices on the learners’ – and beforehand on the (future) teachers’ – side have to be overcome. In order to foster these skills, suitable material and corresponding task types are needed. In this process it would be advantageous, however, if learners and teachers alike can contribute their own experience of the making and change of cultural complexity: they are experts on the topic, especially if they live in a multilingual context.

- *Critical transcultural awareness: focus on border literacies and the ‘making of’ culture*

Finally, gaining critical transcultural awareness would mean critically reviewing one’s own changing identities as well. Learners must become aware that they understand the world and themselves only if they experience and re-experience themselves genuinely and continuously. Co-ordinating perspectives and perspective consciousness seem to be most important in managing transcultural situations in which the insider and outsider status is constantly being replaced by ‘blurring the boundaries’ (for example: race, class, gender, culture, disablement) and recognizing and evaluating changing identities or group affiliations. Transcultural learners must be competent in recognizing, analyzing and successfully managing ‘borders’ and ‘border situations’ of all kinds (not only geographic ones).

Rather than seeing cultures as separate entities, attitudes regarding cultures as open and fluid clusters of different individual cultural practices have to be fostered and steadily sharpened. The starting point for teaching about culture in the language classroom thus no longer can be ‘what is culture?’ (as many textbooks and also Joe’s rant still suggest), but the question of how we perceive and, at the same time, how we construct these (changing) cultural clusters. Moreover, students equipped with the idea of them having to construct cultural clusters are provided with a much more powerful role than just describing their ‘own’ or ‘other’ cultures and mediating between them.

Finally, to exemplify the *Model of Intercultural-/Transcultural Communicative Competence*, Benjamin A. Sáenz’s narrative poem *The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders* (2006) will be read as a transcultural text and analyzed as an example of transcultural learning in the EFL classroom.

#### **4.2. Transcultural Communicative Competence applied: Reading Benjamin Alire Sáenz’s *The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders* (2006)**

<i>The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders</i>	64 He might have been 65 looking for a well. 66 His dreams were made of water. 67 His lips touching
1 A man is walking toward me. 2 He is alone. 3 He has been walking through the desert.	

<p>4 He has been walking for days.  5 He has been walking for years.  6 His lips are dry  7 and cracking  9 like a piece of spent soil.  10 I can see his open wounds.  11 His eyes are dark as a Tanzanian night.  *</p> <p>12 He discovers I have been watching  13 though he has long ceased to care  14 what others see. I ask him  15 his name, ask him what  16 has brought him here, ask  17 him to name  18 his angers and his loves.  19 He opens his mouth  20 to speak –  21 but just as his words hit  22 the air, a bullet  23 pierces his heart.  *</p> <p>24 I do not know  25 the country  26 of this man's birth. I only know  27 that he is from  28 the desert. He has the worn  29 look of despair  30 that only rainless days can give.  31 That is all I know.  32 He might have been born  33 in Jerusalem. He might have been  34 born in Egypt. He might  35 have been the direct descendant  36 of a pharaoh. His name  37 might have been Ptolemy.  38 His name might have been  39 Moses. Or Jesus.  40 Or Muhammad.  41 He might have been a prophet.  42 He might have been a common thief.  43 He might have been a terrorist  44 or he might have been just  45 another man destined  46 to be worn down  47 by the ceaseless, callous storms.  48 He might have come  49 From a country called Afghanistan.  50 He might have been from Mexico.  *</p> <p>51 On my small frame.  52 I am a servant. I shine shoes  53 and wash the feet  54 of the rich. I am an illegal.  55 I am a Mexican who hates all Americans.  56 I am an American who hates all Mexicans.</p>	<p>68 water – yes –  69 that is what he was dreaming.  *</p> <p>70 I can still hear the sound of the bullet.  71 The man reappears.  72 It does not matter  73 that I do not want him  74 in my dreams. He is  75 searching through the rubble  76 of what was once his house.  77 There are no tears on his  78 face. His lips still yearn  79 for water.  *</p> <p>80 I wake. I begin to believe  81 that the man has escaped  82 from Auschwitz. Perhaps he sinned  83 against the Nazis or because  84 he was Jewish  85 or because he loved another man.  86 He has come  87 to the desert looking  88 for a place he can call home.  89 I fall asleep trying  90 to give the man a name.  *</p> <p>91 The man is now  92 walking toward a city  93 that is no longer there.  *</p> <p>94 I am the man.  95 I see clearly. I am  96 awake now.  97 It is me. It has taken me  98 a long time to know this.  99 I am a Palestinian.  100 I am an Israeli.  101 I am a Mexican.  102 I am an American.  103 I am a busboy in a tall building  104 that is about to collapse.  105 I am attending a Sedar and I am  106 tasting my last bitter  107 herb. I am a boy who has learned  108 all his prayers. I am bowing  109 toward Mecca in a house  110 whose roof will soon collapse.</p> <p>111 I am walking toward my home.  112 Mexico City? Washington?  113 Mecca? Jerusalem?  114 I don't know. I don't know.  *</p>
---	--

57 I am a Palestinian who hates all Israeli. 58 I am an Israeli who hates all Palestinians. 59 I am a Palestinian Jew who hates himself. *  60 I am dying of all this knowledge. 61 I am dying of thirst. 62 I am a river that will never know water again. 63 I am becoming dust. *	115 I am walking in the desert.  116 I see that I am reaching a border.  117 A bullet is piercing my heart.
---	---

The poem “The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders” from Benjamin A. Sáenz’s (2006) anthology *Dreaming the End of War* is one of twelve dreamlike poetic narrations in which he describes a doubly-fictitious face-to-face encounter (poem and dream) of his lyrical ‘I’ with a man in a desert [...] *walking toward* him (l. 1). The man coming through the desert, alone, hungry and thirsty is suddenly brutally killed by a bullet (l. 22). After thinking deeply about the man’s destiny, the lyrical ‘I’ finally recognizes himself: *I am the man / I see clearly. I am / awake now. / It is me* (ll. 94-97), *I am walking in the desert* (l. 115).

This poem, as well as all the other poems in the book, negotiates the various conflicts along the border of Mexico and the United States which the lyrical ‘I’ desperately wishes to end, i.e. an end to all the men killing nature, men killing men or men starving in the desert. The immense desert between Mexico and the U.S. literally and metaphorically serves as a physical and geographical transcultural space in the poem. The desert has become a transcultural space for the poor and mainly unemployed or politically unrepresented who move from ‘below’ to the U.S. daily, on the one hand, or, for the relatively wealthy involved in, for example, drug-trafficking and moving from ‘above’ to Mexico, on the other. At the same time the poem defines the massive area along the border between Mexico and the U.S. as a psychological transcultural space in the widest sense. “As invisible as the desert sands we trample on”<sup>5</sup> are the never-ending fights that are being fought between the poor and the rich, the Hindus and the Muslims, the Whites and the Blacks, the Nazis and the Jews etc. The lyrical ‘I’ not only hypothesizes about *the man walking through the desert* in contexts of other cultures and nations (*He might have been born / in Jerusalem. He might have been / born in Egypt*, ll. 32-34) but also about religions (*His name / might have been Ptolemy. / His name might have been / Moses. Or Jesus*, ll. 36-39), socially-outlawed people (*He might have been a common thief. He might have been a terrorist* (ll. 42f) and gender affiliations (*or because he loved another man*, l. 85). The lyrical ‘I’ finally recognizes himself as someone who embodies transculturality: *I am a Palestinian. / I am an Israeli. / I am a Mexican. / I am an American*. (ll. 99-102). He even jumps to other continents, crosses borders and observes transcultural situations from a historical point-of-view: *I wake. I begin to believe / that the man has escaped / from Auschwitz. Perhaps he sinned / against the Nazis or because / he was Jewish* (ll. 81-84). The transcultural lyrical ‘I’ understands himself as somebody who is constantly having to replace his own identity by ‘blurring the boundaries’ (race, class, gender, culture, religion etc.): *I am a Mexican who hates all Americans. / I am an American who hates all Mexicans. / I am a Palestinian who hates all Israeli. / I am an Israeli who hates all Palestinians. / I am a Palestinian Jew who hates himself*. (ll. 55-59).

Cognitive insights into hybrid and fragmented characteristics of the lyrical ‘I’, perspective awareness and the ability to engage in flexible changes of perspectives and global knowledge (geographical, historical, religious) are necessary for reading the poem as a transcultural text and making use of it for transcultural learning. Furthermore, the lyrical ‘I’ moves from being the protagonist involved in his story to a more distanced observer of his own dream, retrospectively and prospectively (*internal focalization*). The desert thus simultaneously becomes a complex metaphor for war (ll. 22f, 70; 117) and peace (ll. 51f; 76; 86-88); this metaphor in itself thus embodies a transgression of the self/other-binary.

The lyrical ‘I’s dream, however, conclusively moves towards a greater peace: *I am walking in the desert. / I see that I am reaching a border* (ll. 115f) – geographically, physically, psychologically, linguistically.

---

Gabriele Blell & Sabine Doff (2014), It takes more than two for this tango: Moving beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom. *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 19: 1, 77-96. Abrufbar unter [http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell\\_Doff.pdf](http://zif.spz.tu-darmstadt.de/jg-19-1/beitrag/Blell_Doff.pdf).

Being transculturally competent thus means for learners consciously and skillfully interpreting culture(s) (race, class, gender, religion, language included) in which insider/outsider status is replaced by blurring the borders and recognizing multiplicities or identity and group affiliation.

### 4.3. Teaching with the poem and moving beyond

In the following, we suggest ways of using Sáenz's transcultural poem in the EFL classroom. Possible teaching scenarios in the form of pre-, while- and post-reading tasks/activities are discussed. All tasks presented in the following are designed in line with the expanded Model of Inter-/Transcultural Communicative Competence (part 4.1) which moves beyond the traditional binary scope of self/other. Instead it encourages dynamic and flexible cross-cultural notions that demand expanded competences to understand and interpret the text against a transcultural background.

#### PRE-READING TASKS

1.

*The lyrical 'I' in Sáenz's poem has been dreaming about deserts and borders.*

- *Quickly note down what you associate with a desert / living in a desert / borders. Make use of the pictures.*
- *Go to google-map and search for deserts which are crossed by borders or are near borders. Name the adjacent countries.*



Illustration 3: Deserts and borders (pics.tech4learning.com, 27-05-2013)

**Comments:**

- The reader is asked to brainstorm global knowledge of deserts and borders (geographical, political, social, cultural; e.g. Sahara: Algeria-Chad-Egypt-Libya-Mali etc.; Gobi Desert: China-Mongolia; Sonoran Desert: Mexico-USA), recognize deserts as ambiguous places of beauty (oasis, colours etc.) and evil (dryness, drought, no water, thirst etc.) and, speculate about borders (protection, to violate borders, drug-trafficking, new vistas). (**Cognitive level / global knowledge**)
- Various images of deserts and borders help to arouse curiosity and openness in order to suspend disbelief about unknown spaces and processes. (**Affective level / attitude**)

**WHILE-READING TASKS**

2.

*Read the poem. Retell the dreamlike story which the lyrical 'I' has experienced. Particularly consider protagonists, setting, mood, climax of the story and ending.*

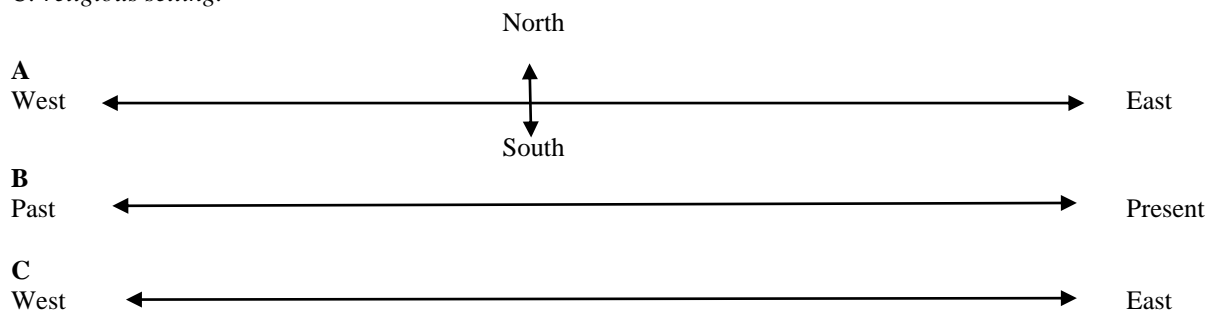
3.

*Use the graphs below to (re-)construct the*

*A: geographical setting,*

*B: historical setting,*

*C: religious setting.*



4.

*Obviously, the lyrical 'I' has come a long way to recognize: I am the man. I see clearly. I am awake now. (ll. 94-96). Depict the steps and obstacles on his way to this recognition and discuss them in the context of the lyrical 'I's understanding of real and fictitious worlds.*

5.

*The local setting/s of desert/s and border/s is/are central for this piece of writing. Try to figure out their symbolical/metaphorical meanings. Look for appropriate passages to prove your findings.*

6.

*Try to analyze and interpret the lyrical 'I's dream from a psychological perspective. Especially focus on lines 115-117 (the end). Summarize your findings in a profile and write them down (200 words). This time try to discover the role of the bullet: l. 115 I am walking in the desert./ l. 116 I see that I am reaching a border./ l. 117 A bullet is piercing my heart.*

**Comments:**

- Tasks 2-6 provide various stimuli for the reader to experience and understand the lyrical 'I's long way through the desert and, thereby, his own painful process of discovery from being unaware of his own identity on the move to his complex understanding of being *the man* (l. 94) who transcends his identity across cultures, classes, religions, time and geographical places.

- The reader is asked to interpret the desert sands and the border as a multi-metaphorical fight beyond cultures that the lyrical 'I' has fought. The 'bullet' simultaneously finishes his dream-like fight and opens his eyes. He is a man, a human being struggling for appreciation and peace as people worldwide do it.
- Taking a psychological perspective, the reader is invited to critically interpret and explain the lyrical 'I's dream in the context of his own manifold background(s) and perspectives (history, culture, religion, gender etc.). (**Skills of interpreting and relating / skills of discovery and interaction / knowledge about metaphors and symbols**)

## POST-READING TASKS

7.

*In lines 94-114 the lyrical 'I' tries to find out who he is. Use the poem's structural frame and compose your own short autobiographical poem. Include the past, the present and the future. Touch on aspects of race, class, gender, age or religion as well. You may use more than only the English language to 'define' yourself (native language or other learned languages).*

94     ***I am the man [girl]***  
 95     *I see clearly. I am*  
 96     *awake now.*  
 97     *It is me. It has taken me*  
 98     *a long time to know this.*  
 99     *I am a Palestinian.*  
 100    *I am an Israeli.*  
 101    *I am a Mexican.*  
 102    *I am an American.*  
 103    *I am a busboy in a tall building*  
 104    *that is about to collapse.*  
 105    *am attending a Sedar and I am*  
 106    *tasting my last bitter*  
 107    *herb. I am a boy who has learned*  
 108    *all his prayers. I am bowing*  
 109    *toward Mecca in a house*  
 110    *whose roof will soon collapse.*  
 111    *I am walking toward my home.*  
 112    *Mexico City? Washington?*  
 113    *Mecca? Jerusalem?*  
 114    *I don't know. I don't know.*

8.

*Read another student's poem. Compare your own fictitious quest for identity with your neighbor's and critically reflect on both. What is comparable, and what is not? What are possible obstacles or ambiguities? Can you identify borders? Write a short comment in response to your partner's poem.*

### Comments:

- The reader is finally challenged to poetically analyze and interpret his/her own processes of identity quest which involves continuously replacing and re-evaluating his/her own status by ignoring experienced boundaries (cultural, group affiliation, gender) and recognizing possible multiplicities of identities. To support the process of authentication, the reader is explicitly requested to use other language in which he/she is comfortable with (or which he/she hates, to symbolize negative 'border' situations). (**Education / critical transcultural awareness / border literacies / multiple literacies**)



- Moreover, the reader discovers new knowledge of the cultural practices of his/her fellow student and is invited to interact under the constraints of real-time communication. (**Skills of discovery and interaction**)

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that it is high time to move beyond the self/other-binary in teaching about culture in the global EFL-classroom. Worldwide ongoing cultural and social processes in which the nation is progressively losing its influence on cultural (and linguistic) representations have not only opened up new vistas for cultural and literary theory but have also increased the challenge in teaching about culture in school. Moreover, the German EFL-classroom itself has become multicultural and multilingual in many urban (but increasingly also in rural) places. We, therefore, suggest an extension of Byram's model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram 1997) into one of Inter-/Transcultural Communicative Competence. We propose extending the existing model through encouraging modified and more complex competences like 'critical transcultural awareness' (perspective awareness included / affective and education level), border literacies, global knowledge and multiple literacies (cognitive and skill level). This extended model was applied in this paper for the reading and teaching of the transcultural narrative poem "The Fifth Dream: Bullets and Deserts and Borders" by the Mexican-American writer Benjamin A. Sáenz.

In conclusion, with our model we project a future of cultural plurality and polyvocality in the global EFL classroom which unquestionably requires highly professional EFL expertise, but also moves beyond English speaking cultures and English varieties of speech and, hence, opens up cross-curricular and multilingual vistas.

## Literaturverzeichnis

- Altmayer, Claus (2008), Was ist 'deutsche Kultur'? Zum Gegenstand der Kulturstudien im Fach Deutsch als Fremdsprache aus transkultureller Perspektive. In: Martinson, Steven D. & Schulz, Renate A. (Hrsg.), *Transcultural German Studies / Deutsch als Fremdsprache. Building Bridges / Brücken bauen*. Bern: Lang, 25-37.
- Antor, Heinz (2006), Multikulturalismus, Interkulturalität und Transkulturalität: Perspektiven für interdisziplinäre Forschung und Lehre. In: Antor, Heinz (Hrsg.), *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien. Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 25-39.
- Appelbaum, Peter (2002), *Multicultural and Diversity Education. A Reference Handbook*. Oxford: ABC Clío.
- Bach, Gerhard (2005), Will the Real Madonna please reveal herself?! Mediating 'Self' and 'Other' in Intercultural Learning. In: Hermann-Brennecke, Gisela & Kindermann, Wolf (Hrsg.), *Anglo-American Awareness: Arpeggios in Aesthetics*. Münster: LIT, 1-15.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994), *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Blell, Gabriele (2012), Sammy & Juliana in Hollywood. Vernetztes literarisches Lernen durch ein (E-)Begegnungsprojekt. In: Leitzke-Ungerer, Eva; Blell, Gabriele & Vences, Ursula (Hrsg.), *English-Español: Vernetzung im kompetenzorientierten Spanischunterricht*. Stuttgart: ibidem, 239-258.
- Blell, Gabriele & Rust, Ina (2012), E-Begegnungen und transkulturelles Lernen in der literaturdidaktischen Ausbildung von Lehramtsstudierenden. In: Blell, Gabriele & Lütge, Christiane (Hrsg.), *Fremdsprachendidaktik und Lehrerbildung. Konzepte, Impulse, Perspektiven*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 113-132.
- Bolton, Jürgen (2003), *Interkulturelle Kompetenz*. Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung.
- Bredella, Lothar (2002), *Literarisches und interkulturelles Verstehen*. Tübingen: Narr.
- Byram, Michael (1997), *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Cates, Kip (2000), Global Education. In: Byram, Michael (Hrsg.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning*. London: Routledge, 241-243.
- Delanoy, Werner (2006), Transculturality and (Inter-)Cultural Learning in the EFL Classroom. In: Delanoy, Werner & Volkmann, Laurenz (Hrsg.), *Cultural Studies in the EFL Classroom*. Heidelberg: Winter, 233-248.
- Delanoy, Werner (2008), Transkulturalität und Literatur im Englischunterricht. In: Gnutzmann, Claus; Königs Frank G. & Zöfgen, Ekkehard (Hrsg.), *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen: Lehren und Lernen mit literarischen Texten*. Tübingen: Narr, 95-108.
- Diehr, Bärbel (2007), Vom Fremdverstehen zur Friedenserziehung – neue Perspektiven für die Didaktik des Fremdsprachenunterrichts. In: Bredella, Lothar & Christ, Herbert (Hrsg.), *Fremdverstehen und interkulturelle Kompetenz*. Tübingen: Narr, 169-176.
- Doff, Sabine (2011), Topography of Difference: Local and Global Stories of Childhood in Roch Carrier's *The Hockey Sweater*. In: Doff, Sabine & Schulze-Engler, Frank (Hrsg.), *Beyond 'Other Cultures': Transcultural Perspectives on Teaching the New Literatures in English*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 129-142.
- Doff, Sabine & Schulze-Engler, Frank (2011), Beyond 'Other Cultures': An introduction. In: Doff, Sabine & Schulze-Engler, Frank (Hrsg.), *Beyond 'Other Cultures': Transcultural Perspectives on Teaching the New Literatures in English*. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1-16.
- Florio-Hansen, Inez de (2002), Von der Friedenserziehung zur Global Education: Fremdsprachenunterricht in Zeiten der Internationalisierung und Globalisierung. *Französisch heute* 33: 3, 325-343.
- Grünewald, Andreas; Küster, Lutz & Lüning, Marita (2011), Kultur und Interkulturalität. In: Meißner, Franz-Joseph & Krämer, Ulrich (Hrsg.), *Spanischunterricht gestalten. Wege zu Mehrsprachigkeit und Mehrkulturalität*. Seelze: Klett & Kalmeyer, 49-80.
- Guest, Michael (2006), Culture research in foreign language teaching: Dichotomizing, stereotyping and exoticizing cultural realities? *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* [online] 11: 3, 14 p.
- Hannerz, Ulf, 1998 [1996], *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hauenschild, Katrin (2010), Transkulturalität – (k)ein Leitbild für die Weiterentwicklung interkultureller Bildung? In: Datta, Asit (Hrsg.), *Zukunft der transkulturellen Bildung – Zukunft der Migration*. Frankfurt a.M.: Brandes & Apsel, 148-166.
- Hu, Adelheid (1999), Interkulturelles Lernen. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Kritik an einem umstrittenen Konzept. *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* 10: 2, 277-303.
- Hu, Adelheid (2000), Begrifflichkeit und interkulturelles Lernen. Eine Replik auf Edmondson & House 1999. *Zeitschrift für Fremdsprachenforschung* 11: 1, 130-136.
- Huggan, Graham (2006), Derailing the 'Trans'? Postcolonial Studies and the Negative Effects of Speed. In: Antor, Heinz (Hrsg.), *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien: Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Heidelberg: Winter, 55-61.
- Kachru, Braj B. (1985), Standards, codification and sociolinguistic realism. The English language in the outer circle. In: Quirk, Randolph & Widdowson, Henry G. (Hrsg.), *English in the World. Teaching and learning the language and literatures*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 11- 36.
- Kollenrott, Anne Ingrid (2008), *Sichtweisen auf deutsch-englischen bilingualen Geschichtsunterricht*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang.
- Kostogriz, Alex & Tsolidis, Georgina (2008), Transcultural Literacy: between the global and the local. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 16: 2, 125-136.
- Kramsch, Claire (1993), *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford UP.

- Krell, Gertraude; Riedmüller, Barbara; Sieben, Barbara & Vinz, Dagmar (2007), *Diversity Studies. Grundlagen und disziplinäre Ansätze*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag.
- Küster, Lutz (2003), Der Gegensatz 'Transkulturalität' und 'Interkulturalität' aus Sicht der deutschen Erziehungswissenschaft – Anschlussmöglichkeiten für die Fremdsprachendidaktik? In: Eckert, Johannes & Wendt, Michael (Hrsg.), *Interkulturelles und transkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 41-52.
- [The] *Missionary Register* (1818), London: Church Missionary Society.
- Müller-Hartmann, Andreas & Schocker-von Ditfurth, Marita (2004), *Introduction to English Language Teaching*. Stuttgart: Klett Verlag.
- Phillipson, Robert (1992), *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Priewe, Marc (2007), *Writing Transit: Refiguring National Imaginaries in Chicana/o Narratives*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag.
- Robertson, Roland (1995), Glocalizations: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, Mike; Lash, Scott & Robertson, Roland (Hrsg.), *Global Modernities*. London: Sage, 25-44.
- Sáenz, Benjamin A. (2006), *Dreaming the End of War*. El Paso: Cinco Punto Press.
- Said, Edward (1993), *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Schulze-Engler, Frank (2006), Von 'Inter zu Trans': Gesellschaftliche, kulturelle und literarische Übergänge. In: Antor, Heinz (Hrsg.), *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien. Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Heidelberg: Winter, 41-53.
- Schumann, Adelheid (2008), Transkulturalität in der romanistischen Literaturdidaktik. Kulturwissenschaftliche Grundlagen und didaktische Konzepte am Beispiel der *littérature beur*. In: Gnutzmann, Claus; Königs Frank G. & Zöfgen, Ekkehard (Hrsg.), *Fremdsprachen Lehren und Lernen: Lehren und Lernen mit literarischen Texten*. Tübingen: Narr, 81-94.
- Selby, David & Rathenow, Hans-Fred (2003), *Globales Lernen: Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II*. Berlin: Cornelsen.
- Uka, Ben R. (2010), *Transcultural Learning in the EFL Classroom Supported by the Web-based Application L.A. Crash Filmschool*. Hannover: Ms.
- Welsch, Wolfgang (1997), Transkulturalität. Zur veränderten Verfassung heutiger Kulturen. In: Schneider, Irmela & Thomson, Christian W. (Hrsg.), *Hybridkultur. Medien, Netze, Künste*. Köln: Wienand Verlag, 67-90.
- Witte, Arnd (2006), Überlegungen zu einer (inter)kulturellen Progression im Fremdsprachenunterricht. *Fremdsprachen Lernen und Lehren* 35, 28-43.
- Wolf, Ramona (2008), *Spektrum des Selbst im interkulturellen Kontext. Gloria Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera. The New Mestiza*. Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag.

## Anmerkungen

<sup>1</sup> Roland Robertson (1995) regarded *glocalization* as the central phenomenon of contemporary globalization. See also Doff 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Although the more modern notion of the *salad bowl* gives the great varieties of ethnic groups in the U.S. a discrete voice, the theory has its deficits as well. Relatively easily, certain 'ingredients' may be altered or even excluded, according to anyone's taste (e.g. political or economical decisions).

<sup>3</sup> 'I am Canadian': <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRI-A3vakVg> (13.05.2013).

<sup>4</sup> In Karin Baier's multilingual theatre production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummernight's Dream* (1995), the colored, English queen, Hippolyta, is forced to speak her conqueror's language, Italian, only. Her mother tongue is forbidden.

<sup>5</sup> Goodreads: [http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/486543.Dreaming\\_the\\_End\\_of\\_War](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/486543.Dreaming_the_End_of_War) (13.05.2013).